

Striving for Normalcy

by Separatist Supporter

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Summary: 100 Prompts. They wanted it, that was only natural. Wanted the constants that they had been denied by fate. They would aim for every last shred of normality they could get. Tom-B292/Lucy-B091
Ash-G099/Holly-G003 Olivia/Mark

Striving for Normalcy

Disclaimer: As the upcoming _Halo_ comics are all intent on forcing Palmer down our throats, and are not the continuing adventures of Blue Team, _what do you think?_

****A/N#1:**** This started out as a few one-shot ideas, and then I found a 100 Prompts list on deviantART and threw the three summaries I'd already made into it. This is one of them. This one can be considered in the same continuity as or a sequel to _Embrace._

****A/N#2:**** So, yes, more Tom/Lucy (and Ash/Holly and Olivia/Mark to come). What can I say? Oh yes: I've reached saturation point on Chief/Kelly, never much liked Chief/Cortana, and I detest Palmer (sorry Lasky, you have to do more than merely _not_ be a raging idiot to make me care). Any pairings in the Kilo-5 Trilogy are brought down by, well, _being in the_ _Kilo-5 Trilogy_. I might like some S-II couples, but I don't feel inclined to write them. And other than Jorge, Noble Team bores me.

Word count: 1,127

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><p>"Why doesn't Mommy talk?"

Tom felt a shiver move up his spine and looked away from his book and to the child. The boyâ€"Adam, _their son_â€"stared back at him. Though only five years old, the boy possessed a level of maturity

beyond his years.

He was also intelligent. Adam had taken to sign language remarkably fast (or so Tom had been told) and could largely follow his parents' silent conversationsâ€”though he did not grasp all of the subtleties the two of them used. He could also communicate fairly well with them that way but he was often, if not impatiently, to the point and preferred to speak.

Those traits meant Adam was usually easy to handle; but when he wanted to know something, he couldâ€”and would, Tom knewâ€”press the matter farther than he really should. And few questions could be more difficult to answer than the one that had just been asked. Tom did not want to mislead his child, neither did Lucy and they had so far managed to avoid doing so, but he was at a loss for how to explain what they had been through to the boy.

He sighed and ran a hand through his hair. _Lucy'll need to be here for this._ "Wait here," he said softly, "I'll be back in a minute."

Given the subject matter, Adam gave him a suitably solemn nod as he got up.

Their homeâ€”a mil-spec prefab left over from the Great War that Lucy had been living in when they were reunitedâ€”was not large, though for two retired SPARTANs it qualified as luxurious. For a family of threeâ€”soon to be fourâ€”it was more than adequate, so it did not take long to reach his companion.

She sat cross-legged beneath a tree in the yard, tapping a stylus against her lip as she stared intently at the datapad in her hands; she had been fond of crossword puzzles and the like back on Onyx and still was. Tom did not bother to hide his approach. There was really no need, and the sooner he got back inside out of the heat, the better. The region of Sigma Octanus IV they called home tended towards what Tom considered uncomfortably hot and dry in the summer and, while she seemingly enjoyed it, he tried to remain inside as much as possible.

His partner looked up, a smile of the kind meant only for him flashing across her lips; the expression on her face turned to one of concern, though, when she saw the turmoil in his eyes. He offered a hand and she accepted, deactivating the datapad as he pulled her to her feet. Lucy did not ask him what was wrong; Tom did not doubt she already knew or at least suspected what troubled himâ€”there were few things that could throw him for a loop, most of which were far removed from their lives now. She gave his hand a firm squeeze and followed him back in.

Adam was there when they returned, though the boy had gone to his room and now held his favorite toyâ€”a stuffed Mantis mech wearing a top hat (1), the thought processes that had led to the object's creation being something Tom had always felt he was better off not understandingâ€”in his arms and sat across from where the two of them normally did. Adam, as smart as he was, probably knew that he would not like the answers to his question.

They took their seats on the sofa and Tom heard Lucy let out the breath she had been holding in. They had tried to plan for this

eventuality, but both had hoped to be able to hold off until their childâ€_children_, he mentally corrected, were older. Unsurprisingly though, the old military truism held: no plan survived contact with the enemy.

You know about the War, he signed out. It was not a questionâ€everyone knew about the Human-Covenant War, no matter how young. The damage was simply too pervasive.

Adam nodded and hugged the stuffed toy tighter.

Your father and I were born in the early years of the conflict, Lucy elaborated as she picked up where Tom left off. Her gestures were rapid but precise, and someone who did not know that was how she always communicated might have thought her agitated.

Tom resumed: _We were only a little older than you are now when they found our home worlds. We were the only ones from our families to get away in time._ He remembered his original surname, as Lucy did hers, but they were not those people anymore. Tom Barragan and Lucy Schaudt (2) had died with their biological families; they were Tom and Lucy Ambrose now, because Kurt, Mendez, and Beta had been their family for at least as long.

We eventually took an early enlistment to leave the foster system, Lucy pantomimed. That was the story mandated by the Office of Naval Intelligence if anyone was curious about their service; it was also an extremely skewed version of the truth. _We were part of the same team during training._

One of our missions went into Covenant territory, Tom continued as his partner's movements floundered and briefly lost their machine-like precisionâ€twenty years may have dulled the pain, but those wounds would never fully healâ€_but the intel was bad. There were cruisers over the target that saw us drop in. We were the only ones to survive the engagement; we watched people we had known and fought alongside for years die._ He did not mention how long it had taken to convince themselves that sabotaging the refinery's reactor had been the right choice.

I was devastated, Lucy signed out, having pushed away the memories. _I couldn't believe we were the only ones left and I just . . . _she paused, trying to think of the best way to explain going into shock to a five year old. _Shut down,_ she finally said, _but your father stayed with me from leaving the planet to being picked up by the cruiser that had first deployed us._

She turned to Tom. _I wish my last words to you had been something different._

And I wish I had come looking for you so much sooner than I did. He put an arm around Lucy as he finished signing and then drew her close.

Adam, still silent, put down his toy and moved to sit on Lucy's other side. The boy wrapped his arms around his mother and murmured: "I'm sorry I made you sad Mommy."

Tom put his free hand on the child, "You're the best thing that's ever happened to us. You and your sister."

* * *

><p>(1)â€"What? It already looks like it has a monocle in game.<p>

(2)â€"I have surnames and home worlds for all of Teams Saber and Foxtrot from _Ghosts of Onyx._ Even the dead ones, because you never know . . .

Thanks must go to Fred-104 for beta work; he found a rather embarrassing gaff or three.

Also, I'm open to suggestions for different titles and/or summaries.

End
file.